

Together We Rise Campus Center FAQ

<https://www.mhu.edu/alumni-together-we-rise-campus-center-faq/>
accessed 28 June 2025

What is happening on the MHU campus with all of the construction occurring?

Over the past decade the university has studied various options to renovate or replace Wren Student Center, which was built many years ago. We have also been working to make our campus more beautiful and to fix deteriorating sidewalks on the Lunsford Commons. We engaged architectural experts, met with students, staff, and faculty and determined, after much research, that Wren was not well suited to being retrofitted into a modern state-of-the-art campus center. It was determined that Blackwell Hall was a more central location on campus, also in need of renovation, and had significant room for expansion. Landscape architects were also involved in the planning. They researched a complete restoration of the Lunsford Commons and looked at creating an amphitheatre behind Blackwell Hall so that outdoor concerts, events, and performances could take place in years to come. They have studied and planned for new sidewalks, better lighting, and new trees to be planted around Lunsford Commons and the Lower Quad.

Will the new Campus Center project necessitate the removal of any of our existing buildings?

The new campus center will renovate the existing Blackwell Hall building, as well as nearly double the footprint of that building. In order to accommodate the larger building, loading and unloading zones, and accessibility needs, as well as access to the construction site and staging, it is necessary that the Robinson Infirmary building be removed. In recent years, it had become necessary to relocate the Student Health Center to a more modern facility and the Robinson building has not been in use. We have relocated items that were stored there, like the medical instruments of beloved Dr. Otis Duck, and we plan to repurpose the stone that is available from the building over time, including a plan for the headstone from Joe Anderson's original gravesite, which is embedded as a part of the building wall.

Will the materials from the Robinson Infirmary be recycled or incorporated into the new buildings in any way?

We plan to store the rock from Robinson Infirmary and repurpose it in various ways throughout campus as needed. The rock may need to be cleaned and worked on before reincorporation into the campus.

Will trees be removed during the construction project?

It is necessary to remove some trees from around the construction area. One of those trees will be the Robert Moore memorial tree located on the side of Blackwell Hall near NC 213. This tree has already sustained damage from winds and storms. We will be replanting trees and improving green space around the Lunsford Commons and the Lower Quad for students, faculty, staff, and community enjoyment. We also plan to repurpose wood from select trees as much as possible, as has been done in years past on our campus.

How long will the campus be under construction?

We anticipate that the campus center will be complete by fall of 2025.

When will the front sign be finished?

The front sign construction should be finished by May 2024. Since the rest of the area will still be under construction, we do anticipate that this will not be the picturesque spot that graduates have used in the past for photos. We are working on setting up an area with the school logo that graduates can use if they would like photos, and of course there are many other beautiful areas of campus that will be available.

When will the Sunken Garden area be finished?

We plan to have a ribbon cutting or dedication of the Sunken Garden and front sign in May 2024.

Is the gazebo lot in downtown Mars Hill tied to this project?

Mars Hill University worked closely with the town and ultimately purchased the gazebo lot through the funding of a generous donor. We will be beautifying the lot, planting new trees, and making it into an accessible space for all. Our board of trustees recently voted unanimously to name the space as the Trammell Family Park. We look forward to having an open public space that the entire Mars Hill community can continue to enjoy and make it accessible for all. We are hoping to introduce a new water feature on the lot and utilize an old mill stone that has been stored on our campus for many years. We will not be removing the gazebo. You can see plans for how the park will look at [this link](#).

Will the lower quad be affected by this construction?

Part of the plan of the campus center is to open up the views of Bailey Mountain and open up the building to green space and outdoor seating, as well as build out a portion of the Lower Quad into an amphitheatre space for performances, complete with a stage.